

ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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JANUARY SIGN UP FOR COUNTIES TO EVALUATE ANIMAL CONFINEMENT SITES

DES MOINES — Counties that are interested in evaluating proposed sites for confinement facilities that need a construction permit must formally notify the DNR by Jan. 31, 2005.

“For counties that adopt the master matrix, this is an opportunity to have input on site selection, the type of structures and manure management being proposed,” said Gene Tinker, coordinator of the DNR animal feeding section.

To have that opportunity, counties must adopt and file a construction evaluation resolution and submit it to the DNR between Jan. 1 and Jan. 31, 2005. The resolution will allow counties to use the master matrix when evaluating construction permit applications received from Feb. 1, 2005, to Jan. 31, 2006.

Eighty-six counties filed resolutions in 2004. Eighty-seven counties filed resolutions in 2003, the first year that the master matrix was in effect.

Producers in counties that file the resolutions must meet higher standards than other permitted sites. They must earn points on the master matrix by choosing a site and using practices that reduce impacts on the environment and the community.

Participating counties must evaluate the master matrix and make a recommendation on all construction permit applications submitted to the DNR or they forfeit the right to evaluate sites until the next sign-up period.

Counties that have adopted a resolution should mail it to Tammie Krausman at the DNR, 502 East Ninth Street, Des Moines, IA 50319 or fax it to 515-281-6794. Sign-ups occur annually during the month of January.

Most confinement feeding operations that need to apply for a permit are subject to the matrix. For more information on which operations are affected, check the DNR Web site under animal feeding operations at www.iowadnr.com.

Additional information for counties is available on the Iowa State Association of Counties Web site at <http://www.iowacounties.org/>.

For more information, contact Tammie Krausman at (515) 281-8382.

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PUBLIC HEARINGS SET FOR DNR ENGINEERING STANDARDS FOR OPEN FEEDLOTS

DES MOINES — The DNR has proposed rule changes for animal feeding operations. The purpose of the amendments is to create a separate division within the current rules for regulations pertaining specifically to open feedlots.

“These rules will clearly define engineering standards for those open feedlots that need a permit,” said Gene Tinker, coordinator of the DNR’s animal feeding operations.

The proposed rules would establish minimum design standards for manure and effluent control structures for open feedlots. The DNR was directed to develop the standards by a 2003 change in state law.

Five public hearings will be held on the proposed rule for engineering standards. The dates, locations and times are:

- Jan. 4, at 8:30 a.m. in the Red Oak Fire Station, 1904 N. Broadway St., in Red Oak.
- Jan. 4, at 6:30 p.m., in Room 142-146 of the main building at the Des Moines Area Community College – Carroll Campus, 906 N. Grant Road, in Carroll.
- Jan. 5, at 8:30 a.m. in the Spencer Events Center, 800 West 18th St., Spencer, IA
- Jan. 5, at 6:30 p.m. at the Lime Creek Nature Center, 3501 Lime Creek Road in Mason City.

- Jan. 7, at 8:30 a.m. in the Iowa Rooms A and B on the 3rd floor of the Iowa Hall, Kirkwood Community College, 6301 Kirkwood Boulevard S.W., in Cedar Rapids.

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing during the public hearings. All other comments must be received no later than Jan. 7, 2005. Any person who intends to attend a public hearing and has special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility, should contact Gene Tinker.

Written comments on the proposed rules should be directed to Gene Tinker at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 502 East Ninth St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319, Fax (515) 281-8895, or by e-mail to gene.tinker@dnr.state.ia.us.

For more information, contact Gene Tinker at (515) 281-3103.

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PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT FOR WATER QUALITY PLAN AT LAKE MEYER

DES MOINES — Plans for improving water quality at Lake Meyer in Winneshiek County will be discussed at a public meeting on Jan. 6. The meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. in the Calmar City Council Chambers, located at the Calmar Fire Department. Comments on the draft plan will be received through Jan. 14.

A draft TMDL — or Total Maximum Daily Load — has been developed for Lake Meyer. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain its designated use such as maintaining aquatic life, allowing body contact such as swimming or being used as a drinking water supply.

TMDLs also include plans on how water quality can be improved through conservation efforts in the respective watersheds. After receiving public comments, the TMDL will be forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

Lake Meyer is impaired from siltation and nutrients that cause aesthetically objectionable conditions at the lake and impair the aquatic life uses at the lake. Nuisance algal blooms are the consequence of excess nutrients, usually phosphorous, which is often carried into the lake attached to sediment during runoff.

These conditions promote heavy algal blooms through the summer and fall, leading to the predominance of blue-green algae, limited clarity and floating algal scum. The lake's designated uses are for primary body contact, such as swimming, and maintaining aquatic life for fishing.

Recommendations made by the DNR for improving water quality at Lake Meyer include:

- Improve nutrient management on row crop ground to achieve optimum soil test range.
- Evaluate open feedlots within the watershed and incorporate needed best management practices to reduce nutrient delivery to Lake Meyer.
- Installation of a pond on the south tributary to Lake Meyer.
- Adoption of best management practices within Calmar to reduce sediment and nutrient delivery to the lake.

The TMDL also recommends continued efforts to reduce soil erosion from row crop fields in the watershed with particular emphasis on fields close to the lake and feeder streams having steeper slopes without effective management practices in place.

Suggested controls include:

- Management practices, such as no-till farming, which will increase crop residue.
- Construction and maintenance of terraces and grassed waterways.
- Install buffer strips along stream corridors.

The draft TMDL can be obtained and comments can be made using the following sources:

- Internet: www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/tmdl/publicnotice.html
- E-mail: chris.vangorp@dnr.state.ia.us
- Telephone: Chris Van Gorp, (515) 281-4791
- Mail: Chris Van Gorp, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319

For more information, contact Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791 or Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395.

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DNR ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR NONPOINT FUNDING

DES MOINES — The DNR is accepting applications for funding of nonpoint source projects aimed at improving Iowa's water quality.

Applications for fiscal year (FY) 2005 Section 319 funding must address nonpoint source pollution problems that are adversely affecting Iowa's water quality. While most projects will be watershed-based, projects may also be designed to address problems on a statewide, regional, or county basis.

Pre-applications, which are optional, are due by Feb. 1, 2005. Pre-applications allow a project to obtain DNR review and comment before developing a full application. Final project applications are due by April 15, 2005.

Of the funding DNR will receive from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for FY 2005, approximately half will be used to protect water bodies included on the state's list of impaired waters. Priority will also be given to projects addressing a water body for

which a TMDL has been completed or is currently being developed. A TMDL, or Total Maximum Daily Load, is a calculation used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain its designated use.

Watershed projects receiving funding will be required to report on reductions in sediment and nutrient delivery achieved from project activities, such as implementation of best management practices.

To be eligible to receive Section 319 funds, projects must be consistent with Iowa's State Nonpoint Source Management Program (NPSMP), dated September 2000. Iowa's NPSMP is available at www.iowadnr.com/water/nonpoint/plan.html. The following activities identified in the NPSMP may be eligible for Section 319 funding:

- Control of agricultural and non-agricultural sources of nonpoint source pollution
- Implementation of best management practices in watersheds of priority surface and ground waters
- Public information and education programs on nonpoint source pollution and its control
- Programs that provide technical assistance for controlling nonpoint source pollution
- Programs which address waterbody restoration

FY2005 funds will likely be available to projects in January 2006.

More information is available on the DNR's Web site at www.iowadnr.com/water/nonpoint/app2.html.

For more information, contact Ubbo Agena at (515) 281-6402 or Becky Schwiete at (515) 242-6196.

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CRP SIGN-UP TO BENEFIT BOBWHITE QUAIL

DES MOINES – Iowa producers can enroll up to 20,000 acres of cropland into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to benefit bobwhite quail and other small birds.

“The program is designed to provide much needed habitat and brood rearing areas for quail and songbirds in the southern part of the state,” said Todd Bogenschutz, a wildlife biologist with the DNR.

Producers can sign up at any time at their local USDA Farm Service Agency, if the counties normally support quail populations. However, the sign up is “first-come, first-served” according to Mike Musel, chief of the FSA conservation and compliance program. “With a limited number of acres available, I would encourage anyone who wants to create quail habitat to sign up in January,” he added.

Eligible areas include cropland and cropland around the edges of existing grain fields. The average width of the enrolled area must be between 30 and 120 feet wide. At least half of the field must be in crops. To be eligible, the land must have been cropped or considered cropped for four of the six years from 1996 to 2001.

Producers will not be able to enroll land that is used for turn rows, roads, or for storage of crops or equipment. In addition, cropland adjacent to a stream filter or buffer strip is not eligible.

Annual payments will be based on the average rental rates for the county. A combination of cost-share programs will pay up to 90 percent of the cost of establishing the field border. An additional sign-up bonus of \$100 per acre is also available. Contracts run for 10 years.

Enrolled areas must be seeded to a combination of native plants including at least four grass species and a combination of at least five wildflowers and legumes.

For technical assistance, producers can contact their local Natural Resources Conservation Service office. The DNR's wildlife biologists can also provide help on selecting plant species.

Producers can contact their local Farm Services Agency for more information.

Note to Editors:

For more information, contact Michael Musel, FSA, at 515-331-8440; Todd Bogenschutz, DNR, at 515-432-2823; or Marcia Roll, NRCS, at 515-284-4353.

A map of eligible counties is attached as a bmp file (CRPquailmap.bmp). In addition, the following counties are eligible:

Woodbury, Monona, Harrison, Shelby, Audubon, Guthrie, Dallas, Polk, Jasper, Poweshiek, Iowa, Johnson, Cedar, Pottawattamie, Cass, Adair, Madison, Warren, Marion, Mahaska, Keokuk, Washington, Louisa, Muscatine, Mills, Montgomery, Adams, Union, Clarke, Lucas, Monroe, Wapello, Jefferson, Henry, Des Moines, Fremont, Page, Taylor, Ringgold, Decatur, Wayne, Appanoose, Davis, Van Buren, Lee, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Jones, Jackson, Clinton, and Scott.

WEDNESDAY AIR QUALITY UNHEALTHY IN SCOTT COUNTY

DES MOINES — Air quality in Scott County was unhealthy for sensitive groups on Wednesday due to microscopic sized particulate matter, the DNR reported today.

The Air Quality Index measured 107 and 103 at two monitoring locations in Davenport based on the 24 hour standard. Air quality began improving about 4:30 a.m. Thursday.

Levels elsewhere across Iowa were elevated, but still in the moderate categories. Other areas of the Upper Midwest also experienced similar conditions. The Air Quality Index (AQI) reports pollution levels using a color-coded and numerical range for pollutants. The higher the AQI, the poorer the air quality.

Iowa's air quality still meets federal health standards, but an increase in the number or severity of days with unhealthy air could pose clean up efforts. Extreme eastern Iowa typically has several days of unhealthy air annually.

An AQI of 1 to 50 is green or good, 51 to 100 is yellow or moderate, 101 to 150 is orange or unhealthy for sensitive groups, 151 to 200 is red, unhealthy for everyone. Rarely monitored are purple for very unhealthy (201 to 300) and maroon for hazardous (301 to 500.)

Particulate matter is a generic term to describe microscopic sized solids, liquid droplets, or aerosols in the air. Because the particles are so small they are able to penetrate the deepest parts of the lungs, increasing the likelihood of respiratory symptoms in sensitive individuals, including children, the elderly and those with heart disease.

These particles can be directly released when coal, gasoline, diesel fuels and wood are burned. Many fine particles are also formed in the atmosphere from chemical reactions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, organic compounds and ammonia.

Particulate air pollution can form anytime of year, unlike summertime ozone smog, which requires hot, sunny conditions.

For more information, contact Brian Button with the Department of Natural Resources at 515-281-7832.